

July 5, 2023

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. Ferguson IV  
President  
Senate of Maryland  
State House, H-107  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker  
Maryland House of Delegates  
State House, H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Critical Life-Threatening Incident Report required by Education Article §7-1502(g)(21) (MSAR#11851) and Education Article §7-1501(g)(3) (MSAR #11594)

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Education Article §7-1502(g)(21), Education Article §7-1501(g)(3), and State Government Article §2-1257, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) respectfully submits the following report, which contains identified lessons learned and school safety recommendations following a critical life-threatening incident on public school grounds.

Any questions related to this report or for additional information, please contact MCSS Deputy Director, J. Dino Pignataro at [joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov](mailto:joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov) or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Bryan  
Executive Director

# Maryland Public School

## Critical Life-Threatening Incident

### After-Action Summary

On May 1, 2023, there was an incident involving a school bus within Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) that met the criteria to be considered a Critical Life-Threatening Incident pursuant to Md. Ed. Art § 7-1510 (g) and COMAR 14.40.05.

#### **Notification** [COMAR 14.40.05.04A]

On May 2, 2023, PGCPS Office of Safety & Security Services School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

#### **After-Action Meeting** [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On May 31, 2023, an after-action meeting was held involving school representatives, law enforcement, and a representative from MCSS.

#### **After-Action Report** [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On June 12, 2023, PGCPS Office of Safety & Security Services submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

#### **Lessons Learned**

Based upon the after-action review led by the PGCPS, the following lessons learned were identified by individuals participating in the after-action meeting:

1. School system emergency management standard operating procedures should be clear and include annexes to ensure all PGCPS staff members are properly trained, and assigned specific duties and responsibilities, during an emergency incident.
2. Recovery procedures should have annexes to provide for mental health assessment and support when PGCPS students and staff have experienced a traumatic event.
3. PGCPS has been exploring the development of a system level incident response team to include; a safety officer, investigators, field operations

supervisors and management representatives. This team would respond to the emergency location and provide specialized response and recovery support. The response team approach would apply to both transportation and school-based emergency events.

## **School Safety Recommendations**

1. Emergency Operating Plans should include procedures for a transportation event that align with the system's safety and security office, and Maryland Emergency Planning Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. Applying an all-hazards approach<sup>2</sup> to school-based transportation emergencies will necessitate coordination across multiple school system divisions (transportation, professional development, human resources, safety and security, student services, leadership), and local emergency responding agencies (fire and rescue, medical, law enforcement).
2. School bus drivers must be provided with the training and tools that allow them to; assess situations that may pose a threat or hazard, determine the best course of action, and take action to protect students and respond to the threat or hazard. Providing a quick reference tool similar to this one developed by the Lincoln County School District in Oregon would be advantageous. [SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY PLAN](#)
3. In some instances of a transportation event, system level leaders may not be allowed to enter the impacted area for an extended period of time, requiring a driver to communicate with system level leaders, and assume the on site leadership role. Training for transportation personnel should include;
  - a. methods for communicating with system level leadership,
  - b. conducting oneself as representative of the system in a unified command structure, and
  - c. procedures for the transfer of students to an approved custodial caregiver, or transfer of this responsibility to another approved school system official.

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<sup>1</sup> [Maryland Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools - December 2019 Edition](#)

<sup>2</sup> An all-hazards approach means that the range of potential threats and hazards is taken into account during the emergency planning process.  
<https://rems.ed.gov/Resources/Specific?Topic=AllHazards>

4. Exercising the response to a transportation emergency provides the opportunity for individuals that would be involved to practice performing their role and responsibilities, as well as helps to identify gaps in the currently defined plan and procedure. Tabletop exercises for a transportation event are available at MCSS<sup>3</sup> and on the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) webpage<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [MCSS tabletop exercise](#)

<sup>4</sup> [REMS TA Center tabletop exercise](#)